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## EX CORDE ECCLESIAE, CULTURE, AND THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

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*Catholic institutions of higher education continue to wrestle with the demands of John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution, Ex Corde Ecclesiae. This article looks beyond the juridical aspects of implementation and focuses on culture as a way to explore the contribution of Catholic colleges and universities to the broader life of the Church and to the wider academy. Popular culture, with its dependence on visual imagery and entertainment, creates a particular challenge for advancing the unique mission and identity of Catholic institutions.*

For a papal document, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is relatively short, 48 numbered paragraphs, 7 articles under general norms, and 4 articles under transitional norms. Given its brevity, it does not pretend to be a philosophical treatise on the nature and purpose of the Catholic university. It does, however, have a theological focus with decided pastoral and spiritual components. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is meant to be a follow-up to the 1979 document *Sapientia Christiana*, a more detailed juridical document, which applied only to institutions of higher learning with a special charter from the Holy See.

The Introduction and Part I of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* comprise the major part of this document and form a strong statement on the identity and mission of the Catholic university. The reader will also notice that *Sapientia Christiana* is not written with as detailed a section on identity and mission—it is simply titled “Foreword”—as is found in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. This observation neither weakens the former nor is condescending to the latter. On the contrary, the *Charter and Mission of Pontifical Faculties and Universities* are specific and concerned with “Christian revelation” and “evangelization” (John Paul II, 1979, p. 7). For its part, a Catholic university has the task of interacting with two orders of reality that are frequently “placed in opposition as though they were antithetical: the search for truth, and the certainty of already knowing the font of truth” (John Paul II, 1990, p. 107).

Much of the North American attention to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* has come from two groups: administrators and faculties of Catholic colleges and universities in the United States of America and the United States Conference of

Catholic Bishops. In general, the attention concerns "Part Two: General Norms," which deals with the practical implementation of the document and the role and relationship of the local ordinary with Catholic colleges and universities; one concern is academic freedom, a matter that is discussed in the document (John Paul II, 1990). Some Catholic academics and administrators, particularly theologians, have been critical about what they see to be the supervisory role of the institutional Church in the section dealing with general norms. Of particular concern is the mission of Catholic theologians, one "received from the Church" and through which they "are to be faithful to the Magisterium of the Church as the authentic interpreter of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition" (John Paul II, 1990, p. 113). There has also been much discussion about the Catholic university and the role of the ordinary with regard to Canons 810 and 812 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

Section two of this article is a brief account of some of the literature on *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Section three is an overview of culture in the document, and section four considers how culture is understood today. The fifth section is an account of some literature on the notion of culture in the Catholic university, and section six reflects upon the relationship between culture and the Catholic university.

## LITERATURE ON *EX CORDE ECCLESIAE*

*Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was promulgated on 15 August 1990. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops received the *recognitio* to their "ordinances" on 3 May 2000 (Final Text, 2000; Fiorenza, 2000). Its application and full effect were completed by 3 May 2001. In Canada, the triangular relationship between the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Presidents of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities of Canada has not yet produced ordinances applicable to Canada.

The North American responses to this document have been largely devoted to the practical norms, with a fair deal of attention to the identity and mission of the Catholic university. It is important to note that the structure of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* appears to be problematic. The Introduction and Part 1 read quite differently from Part II that deals with general norms. Is it too bold to speculate that perhaps they have two different authors? Whatever the answer, the second part does have a belt-tightening quality that is noticeably absent in the more speculative and pastoral style of the introduction and first part of the document (Dosen, 2000).

The *mandatum* has received detailed attention. Conn (2001) discusses three aspects: the implications from Canon Law; the guidelines for the *mandatum*; and the questions for the enforcement of the *mandatum*. Francis Cardinal George of Chicago describes the *mandatum* as a relationship and not

a direct control. The granting of the *mandatum* does not make the bishop responsible for everything a theologian says nor does it make the theologian the mouthpiece of the bishop. Rather, "juridically [it] attests to a common shared faith, a relationship in the Church" (George, 1999, p. 613). Finn (2000), a theologian, outlines four aspects of the *mandatum*: the powers of the bishop, the appeal process, the legal issues, and the procedure when a theologian does not receive the *mandatum* in the prescribed time frame. One bishop draws attention to the word *mandatum* and its relationship to Holy Thursday and Jesus' instruction to wash one another's feet (Morlino, 2000). Finally, in light of the *mandatum*, the Catholic Theological Society of America puts forward a number of "concrete recommendations," though it cautions that this should not be "misconstrued as an endorsement of the *mandatum*" (Catholic Theological Society of America, 2000, p. 245).

During the 10-year period leading up to the promulgation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* in the United States, some have warned that the implementation of the vision and norms of this document could damage Catholic higher education. "Such warning can be summarized under three headings: academic freedom, pluralism, and institutional autonomy" (Baxter, 1999, p. 629). LaCugna (1994) says that

people working in higher education in the United States are unaccustomed to thinking of the Catholic university as born *ex corde ecclesiae*, as an institution that is church-sponsored in the sense that the church offers the university to society, or in the sense that the ultimate responsibility of the university is, through its research and teaching, to serve the gospel of Jesus Christ. (p. 119)

Others have said that this document does not engage the world in the context of contemporary issues and questions, but rather seeks to transform the world according to the Church's vision (Dosen, 2000). Finally, many conferences and publications have reflected upon the complexity of the issues surrounding *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (Langan, 1993).

## AN OVERVIEW OF CULTURE IN *EX CORDE ECCLESIAE*

Culture occupies a place of special importance in this document; indeed it is mentioned more than 55 times in the Introduction and Part I; however, it is mentioned only once in the Conclusion, and not at all in Part II. The notion of culture is very dear to John Paul II, evidenced by his establishing the Pontifical Council for Culture in 1982. This Council, along with the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Pontifical Council for the Laity, produced a joint document: *The Presence of the Church in the University and*



*in University Culture.*

The document *Toward a Pastoral Approach to Culture* states that culture is "anchored" in "Christian anthropology and ethics" (Pontifical Council for Culture, 1999, p. 22). Correspondingly, what is the anchor that holds culture in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*? It is the simple, inherent, and dynamic thrust of the human mind to know, particularly the desire to know the truth. Very early in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* the Pope provides an actual definition of culture: "there is only one culture: that of man, by man and for man" (John Paul II, 1990, par. 3). The reader must turn to the middle of the document for some elaboration. The Catholic university must reflect upon all aspects of culture, and it must communicate to society those ethical and moral principles that give meaning to human life. In doing so, it contributes toward the "development of a true Christian anthropology, founded on the person of Christ" (John Paul II, 1990, par. 33). Thus, culture and its celebration through the various manifestations of the human spirit are possible because Christian culture is secured upon the person of Jesus Christ. The human desire to know and the process of being formed and likened to the person of Christ are inherently linked in two ways. First, Jesus Christ is and reveals the fullness of the truth. Second, in being redeemed and made anew in Christ, the human desire to know extends across the created order but is never isolated from the redemption won in Christ, nor, on the other hand, does it impinge upon the very autonomy of the desire to know. The pope points to this relationship and autonomy by stressing the autonomy of individual disciplines and their freedom to pursue truth according to their own ends.

The Pope sees culture as the revelation of the various dimensions of the human person, the various expressions that men and women have manifested in all that constitutes culture. The Christian mind advances a "high culture" (John Paul II, 1990, par. 9) as well as recognizes cultural treasures, "both old and new" (par. 10). The Catholic approach recognizes culture in its local and universal manifestations (par. 45). Culture also has a specific relationship to the Gospel in particular and to Revelation in general. Human culture grapples with the revelation of God and transcendence, while the Christian message recognizes that the Gospel cannot be identified with any one culture. The Gospel and Christian message also inspire individual cultures.

Dialogue with and learning from culture, particularly with the culture of the times, occupies a place of prominence (John Paul II, 1990). In this regard, theology has a particular role to play in the questions raised by contemporary culture. The norms and values of modern society and culture are to be examined from the Christian perspective (John Paul II, 1990). The diversity of cultures and the various cultural traditions (John Paul II, 1990) call for an inherent respect and dignity, but they also call for the evangelization of culture and cultures.

The role of the Catholic university with Christian culture and all of cul-

ture, including secular culture, receives close attention. The document suggests the development of a Christian culture in the context of "our changing times" (John Paul II, 1990, par. 2). The Catholic university contributes to the "advancement of human dignity" and the celebration of one's "cultural heritage," through research and teaching (par. 12). The world of institutional education is a privileged place of culture. Like its secular counterpart, the Catholic university plays its role in the cultural progress of individuals and society. Particularly important is the idea that the university develops culture through its research, and the Catholic university puts students in touch with the Church's culture (John Paul II, 1990). The Catholic university is called to be attentive to the various cultural traditions, the various aspirations and contradictions of modern culture, particularly secularism. Such an institution must also be aware of the place of technology and mass media as manifestations of culture as well as the various fields that have been developed by modern culture. In being knowledgeable of the "ambience" of various cultures and the "contributions of modern cultures" (John Paul II, 1990, par. 45), the Catholic university is also called to dialogue with the sciences and the culture of our age, while recognizing the autonomy of culture and the human sciences. Finally, cultural injustice calls for a keen awareness of the relationship between faith and culture, particularly when faith is placed on the margins of what it means to be human, which in turn pushes culture to the margins as well.

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURE TODAY

Postmodern theology and philosophy have expanded the discussion of human nature and have challenged the concept of human nature as enduring and unchanging. Instead, postmodernism suggests that the social arena, understood in its widest context, is the stage upon which human nature is molded and developed. Postmodernism understands human nature as subjectivity, and the development of subjectivity has given rise to a prolific literature mainly in the areas of sociology and cultural studies. This literature has introduced a diversity of scholarship, some of which is devoted to the everyday and ordinary that only a generation ago would have been considered to be unworthy of the accolade of scholarship. One benefit of this scholarship is that the purpose of everyday and ordinary life is given fresh prominence and engages a wider audience at a level of reflection close to their experience. The distinctions between high and low culture are constantly challenged, resulting in the introduction of the eighth deadly sin: vulgarity (Twitchell, 1992). The debate over the distinctions between high and low culture—so passionately argued for in *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 1993) and

*Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (Hirsch, 1987)—particularly who is to make these distinctions and against what criteria, has led to a more fluid notion of culture. Culture now has porous borders. Today culture ranges from Mozart, Shakespeare, and Renaissance paintings to tattoos, music videos, and New Age spirituality because contemporary culture's understanding of human nature—even though it may not use this precise term—has undergone a significant change. Diversity makes for interesting dialogue, but it can also make it difficult to identify the first principles of community and culture. In the university, dialogue with pluralism is not so much about the desire for unity as it is about the desire for intelligibility (Komonchak, 1997). Furthermore, identifying culture with “the symbolic: the learned ideational aspects of human society” (Jenks, 1993, p. 8), does not simplify matters because today we have more signs than referents and more images than meanings. Furthermore, the traditional claim that culture cannot be associated with the “mundane inevitability of everyday life” (Jenks, 1993, p. 18) has been swept away by the tide of popular culture and populist ideology. Parsons' definition of culture as including transmission, learning, and sharing has become equally obsolete. Culture, some say, must include the production of “collective memories, knowledge, social relations, and values within historically constituted relations of power” (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 50).

Describing culture, therefore, as that body of signs, symbols, literature, music, art, and religion that house the many manifestations of the human spirit can be seen to exclude the many more individual and particular expressions of culture. Many cultural theorists view the classical definitions of culture as static and elitist; they opt for a porous understanding seen to be accommodating and inclusive. Amidst these various discussions about culture emerges another phenomenon: mass culture. Mass culture is what it claims: a culture of the masses, where consumption becomes the driving force. Popular culture is a dimension of mass culture, and it is made available through artifacts, such as television, film, music videos, fashion, clothes, and glossy magazines (Hebdige, 1988). Popular culture has a governing principle: the centrality of vision and the power of sight. Almost all of popular culture is visual; and Music Television, which last year celebrated its 20th birthday, led this revolution. In the world of popular culture, one that is aimed at the young, the sense of sight dominates the other four senses; and the sense of sound gets the second prize.

Strinati (1995) outlines the various movements that have contributed to the understanding of popular culture. This cultural point has been reached on the backs of a number of theories, such as feminism, semiology, structuralism, and postmodernism. While Strinati pays close attention to the components and manifestations of popular culture, one cannot help but notice that it is disconnected from any tradition and it floats freely upon the waves of



consumption, fashion, trend, and desire. Unlike the cultural artifacts and manifestations of previous generations that were linked to tradition understood in the context of successive epochs, visual popular culture simply shops around for images and then pastes them together in a collage whose efficacy and efficiency are judged by the four principles of consumption, fashion, trend, and desire. In all this the power of vision dominates, leading to what has been referred to as the "hegemony of vision" (Levin, 1993), and certainly much of the literature attests to that fact.

There is a tendency to talk about a new world order, with both positive and negative interpretations. The positive is that in the "global village," where one can see events within minutes on the television screen, a consensus can emerge that is more aware of injustices. The negative side is that precisely this image world of television can be a source of manipulation, trivialization, and ultimately an anti-culture of commercial superficiality. (Gallagher, 1998, p. 3)

The sense of sight is one among five senses, and it operates in relationship to the other four. There is no doubt that in human beings sight dominates as the principal sense, but its integration with the other senses contributes toward human unity. Traditional philosophy and theology spoke about the powers of the soul, and one of these powers closely linked to the five senses is imagination. The life of the imagination is sophisticated, and it depends upon memory, the five senses, reason and the intellect, and the other powers of the soul that contribute toward human unity. However, a single image is more powerful than a thousand words, and it can enter the soul and influence the imagination in a lasting manner. The success of the arts and literature depends upon the versatility of the imagination to convert the objects of the five senses into images and ideas. Popular culture is keenly aware of the versatility of the imagination and the power of images upon the imagination. It exercises this influence not through sophisticated analysis of these images or by developing a critical stance toward these images—quite the contrary. The success of popular culture depends upon the fleeting quality of images and their patchwork characteristic.

Three points with regard to the influence of sight in popular culture will help elucidate the importance of visual communication. First, visual culture is global in nature and instantaneous in its outreach. Through television and the Internet, popular culture can reach across the globe selling a new fashion, marketing a new song, or promoting a new lifestyle. It is driven by consumption and desire and is based upon the raw economic principle of buying and selling. Popular culture is thus ubiquitous. For those who can afford access to the media of popular culture, there is more in common with the young from New Delhi, Istanbul, and Beijing than there is among young peo-



ple from their own countries. Second, popular visual culture constructs identities and subjectivities in a manner previously unimagined. Choices and lifestyles are flashed across in an instant and there is no corresponding analysis. Furthermore, while the young are open to critical discussion, the complexity of these images is so disproportionate to the mental and moral stages of the young that critical discussion becomes difficult, if not impossible. An image taken out of context carries its own power and weight and has an ability to influence the observer; placing this image back within its proper context and analyzing it from its proper locus is a much more difficult task. Growing into one's personhood is a lifelong task, but it is particularly delicate in the lives of the young who are impressionable and can easily be manipulated. And third, popular culture is aimed at prolonging youth and adolescence for as long as possible. Indeed adolescence now seems to stretch into the mid to late twenties. Again the prolonging of adolescence raises serious questions about the stages of mental and moral growth. In all of this, the place of memory has been eclipsed by a 24-hour culture that never sleeps—what has been called the “Disney round-the-clock homogenization” (Friedman, 2000, p. 23)—and a culture that stores all the images one needs within the serpentine labyrinth of the Internet.

Popular culture is ubiquitous and views culture purely as instant entertainment. In such a context, the power of words and memory, the collected wisdom of the past, the experience of one's elders, and the place of religious and moral traditions all come to be suspect and are seen to interfere with the goal of entertainment. Indeed, the power of the visual has changed the notion of entertainment itself. Today entertainment is understood primarily as that which can be seen, and stability or permanence need not encumber the seeing. Under these conditions, for example, the stability and permanence of Beethoven's symphonies contradict many of the principles of entertainment of popular culture. The order, rhythm, harmony, and dominance of the sense of sound in symphonic music seem to leave little room for the sense of sight *per se*. Popular culture's limited understanding of the relationship between culture and entertainment comes at the expense of how societies have understood the depth and breadth of culture. In defining itself in purely visual terms, popular culture has narrowed itself as well as the human expression of all that previously fell under the definition of culture.

## **CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNIVERSITY**

Marsden (1994a) writes that there is a dominant American university culture dictating the standards by which institutions qualify as “true universities” (p. 189). This culture, he says, “has distinctly Protestant origins” (p. 192). This

eminent historian also discusses the place and influence of pluralism, diversity, and multiculturalism in academic culture. The movement to depict Catholicism as a culture, says Gleason (1995), began after 1930 when the very term culture, once the exclusive domain of anthropology, was embraced by the social sciences and became "an indispensable term in popular commentary" (p. 148). A Catholic culture seeks to develop a "totality of vision," the way of ordering knowledge and values into a "comprehensive unity." Thus, "building a Catholic culture should be the basic goal of Catholic higher education" (Gleason, 1995, p. 189). Gleason has developed this understanding of an "integrated Catholic culture" in other works as well (1993, p. 12). Frank (2000) says that culture is made possible by human "spiritual powers" and the "interior life" (p. 208). In the context of Catholic higher education, faith and philosophy, like culture, seek to develop a "distinctive attitude toward the world and other persons" (Frank, 2000, p. 211). Heft (2000) isolates four characteristics of contemporary American culture, which no doubt influence Catholic university culture. Two are negative: "excessive individualism" and "the focus of religious experience," this experience understood as the "reduction of religion" to "the religious experience of individuals" (p. 157). The two positive characteristics are "a need for individual integrity" and "the desire for personal religious experience, for feeling what one believes, rather than simply going through the motions" (Heft, 2000, p. 161).

Universities, says Marsden (1994b), were focused upon "science and the highest ideals of Western culture" (p. 369). The cultural upheaval of the last 50 years led to the gradual and often reluctant realization "that these two ideals might be incompatible" (Marsden, 1994b, p. 369). Burtchaell's (1998) magisterial work *The Dying of the Light* spanning seven Christian denominations, tackles some enormous questions about the cultural situation of Christian higher education in the United States. In commenting on this work, Chapp (1999) says that the main contention of Burtchaell's work "is that America's religiously affiliated colleges and universities have slowly succumbed to the forces of liberal secularity and now only barely resemble what the institutions of their founding Churches and religious orders had in mind" (p. 643).

Finally, Gallin (1999) comments on the relationship between Catholic higher education and inculturation, saying that inculturation consists of two stages: "the first is the effort to enter into and understand the culture into which one is moving; the second is to bring about an interaction between that culture and one's own so that the values of both can be promoted" (p. 108). Groome (1998) says that Catholicism has a natural ability to inculturate, and this process is "supported by a positive anthropology, the principle of sacramentality, and emphasis on community" (p. 224). Through this process, Catholicism is able to affirm learning and knowledge across the entire spectrum of the created order. Finally, one Roman document declares that "the

evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the Gospel go hand in hand" (Pontifical Council for Culture, 1999, p. 19).

## CULTURE AND THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

What is the bridge between John Paul II's understanding of culture in the Catholic university and the culture that students hail from in Catholic colleges and universities? Many would say that it is the Catholic life of faith, prayer, charity, community, and justice. That sounds right, but it does not say how we Catholics are to respond to the specific mission of a university, which as Newman (1923) says concerns the "culture of the intellect" (p. xv) and "universal knowledge" (p. 22). Any university must be primarily concerned with learning and knowledge according to the stages of mental and moral growth of adults and carried out primarily through teaching and scholarship. A Catholic university must do the same, but it places particular stress on the building of a community with many dimensions which manifests the complexity of the human person. In such a community, conceptual knowledge and scholarship occupy a place of prominence, but the complexity of the human person reveals that knowing and learning occur in many different ways, and where knowledge and learning gained through faith and belief are given special importance. Buckley (1998) says that Jesuit education does not come out of a prior philosophy of education but out of a spirituality, "out of a pattern or manner of living under the experiences and empowerment of grace" (p. 81).

What are the cultural questions from students in Catholic colleges and universities? It has been suggested that the two most important problems in undergraduate education today are the coherence of the curriculum and public morality (O'Brien, 1994). In light of the discussion of culture and the Catholic university in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, at least three issues face the Catholic universities within their specific focus and mission. The first is the nature and purpose of knowledge, the knowledge of individual disciplines, and the knowledge of the liberation and freedom of the human person. The second is the ability of the Catholic academy to dialogue with the secular university about the contradictions of contemporary culture, as well as to acknowledge the areas of progress and to carry out this dialogue civilly according to the specific mission of the university. And the third issue is the contribution of the Catholic university to Catholic life and experience as a whole.

To the first issue: Both *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and Catholic educators have stressed the dignity of individual disciplines and the methods of reaching the truth particular to each discipline. It has been confirmed time and time again, for example, that Catholic physics or Catholic chemistry do not exist, but it is left at that as if it were both a vindication of the independence of knowl-



edge in the Catholic university as such as well as a confirmation that such an institution has something else up its sleeve to prove its intellectual distinctiveness. If so, what is it? The claim that Catholics possess a system of education applicable to any age whatsoever is riddled with difficulties. Some have pointed out that decades before the Second Vatican Council the Catholic dimension of higher education was dependent upon catechesis and apologetics, and there was a significant separation between serious disciplines and theological reflection (Buckley, 1998). On the other hand, today theological research and study and the inclusion of schools of theology in Catholic universities have provided a distinctive and defining feature of this institution. Nevertheless, education is primarily a philosophic activity, and the nature and purpose of knowing and knowledge must be answered accordingly (Maritain, 1962). What is specific about knowing and knowledge in a university? And, what is specific about knowing and knowledge in a Catholic university?

The Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain (1962) called for an expansion for the humanities in a Christian college saying that "our watchword should be enlargement, Christian inspired enlargement, not narrowing, even Christian centered narrowing of the humanities" (p. 136). He urges educators to remember that the curriculum in a Christian college "must deal still more than that of a secular college with the whole of human culture" (p. 135). While this sounds right, what is to be the integrating principle of this curriculum? Should it be Catholic theology, and if so, do Catholic academics not risk being dismissed by their non-Christian colleagues as being narrowly confessional? Or should the integration be conducted by philosophy, and if so, which school of philosophy is it to be? The Catholic traditions of theology and philosophy must both be implemented, and the Catholic academy must be seen to grapple with the fundamental questions about the purpose of knowledge and learning as such and the purpose of knowledge and learning in a Catholic university. As one educator asks pointedly: How can the Catholic tradition rebuild the house of learning? (O'Brien, 1994). The fragmentation and the proliferation of knowledge are reasons for our inability to find common ground to express coherent disagreement, let alone the intellectual luxury of expressing communal agreement. Another reason is the division that is often found among the faculty of Catholic universities according to the debilitating camps of conservatives and liberals, a division that de-energizes the university and confuses students. Often Catholic academics make theological claims and accusations with greater ease and apparent expertise than they are able to identify and articulate the contribution of their particular discipline to the Catholic house of learning or able to say why this house would be weaker without their particular discipline.

In the Catholic university, knowledge and learning have two functions. The first is the search for and knowledge of truth in itself and according to each discipline. The second is the contribution that knowledge and learning



make toward the enhancement of human dignity and the flourishing and realization of community and the common good. Just as the disciplines of the trivium and the quadrivium were the integrating forces of learning in the Middle Ages, perhaps today the integrating disciplines are the social sciences, sociology, economics, political science, and anthropology (Buckley, 1998). Nonetheless, pertinent as these disciplines are, they lack the ability to reflect upon the nature of knowledge as such; for that we must turn to the Catholic intellectual tradition in dialogue with the social sciences and with philosophy and theology. The nature of knowing and knowledge will gradually emerge when the complexity of the issue is admitted and when the richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition is celebrated.

Second, the ability of the Catholic academy to dialogue with the secular university about the contradictions of contemporary culture, as well as to acknowledge the areas of progress and to carry out this dialogue civilly, is a part of the mission of the university. The Catholic academy must face the question of how it is to come to some unifying position enabling Catholic academics and students to face the contradictions of culture. There must be some lens or a series of lenses through which these contradictions are viewed. One way to conduct this dialogue and to face the contradictions of culture could be through the lens of Christian or Catholic anthropology. These precise terms need not be used with the secular university, but Catholic academics must be able to demonstrate their ability to articulate a philosophy of the human person according to the Catholic intellectual tradition. This tradition is rich with its reflection upon the nature and the dignity of the human person.

The specialized world of graduate schools of education shows that educational research is prolific, but its specialists are largely unable to agree as to the nature of the student as a person. Much of the difficulty in identifying the distinctiveness of Catholic education lies in the inability of the Catholic academy to articulate a philosophy of the human person for this age and in dialogue with the Catholic intellectual tradition. Catholics have made great progress about the means of education; perhaps they cannot claim a corresponding progress in comprehending the end of education. This lack shows itself in myriad ways. For example, in dealing with the curriculum of a Catholic college, some of its academics have attempted to guard the treasures of the Western canon through a narrowing rather than a broadening of the humanities. On the other side of the coin, the expansion of humanistic knowledge under the umbrella of cultural studies seems to demand that equal weight be given to all disciplines resulting in what Maritain (1943) warned against in his seventh misconception of education: that everything can be learned. Does the diversity of cultural studies mean, for example, that an analysis of television talk shows should be on par with the study of metaphysics, or that a course on music videos should be on par with St.

Augustine's *City of God*? On the other hand, most students in Catholic schools and universities hail from a culture of talk shows and music videos, and they bring with them a conception of the human person, human society, and an understanding of God that deeply influences how they study metaphysics or read the *City of God*. Indeed, the looming question is, given the influence of popular and visual culture, how does the study of metaphysics and the *City of God* humanize these students? These studies are secured upon different first principles and their importance and value may leave students unconvinced, and with good reason, for they are living and thinking in a world that has slipped away from the secure moorings of the traditional liberal arts and the humanities.

Today more so than ever, culture defines the constructs of knowledge, with little tolerance of what are seen to be the tired and weary answers of the traditional humanities and the liberal arts. Catholic education should begin in experience but be completed in reason, and if Catholic educators believe this, then they must teach and research in ways that begin with the experience of their students and their world and lead them slowly to the mountaintop of reason (Maritain, 1943). From there, students may learn to distinguish between the liberation that comes from knowledge and learning and the seduction of power, selfishness, and individualism, or, to put it plainly, to distinguish between being and sin. After all, from a Catholic perspective, an integral culture is manifested in the flourishing of human society where the nobility of the soul expresses itself in myriad ways, engaging all the senses and leading the human person to experience and to transform culture in the continual journey of transcendence.

The distinction and relationship between the intellect and the will have always occupied a place of prominence in Catholic education. While affirming that the specific purpose of the educational institution was intellectual, Catholic educators also stressed the primacy of moral education via the enlightenment of the intellect. This is not a matter of nostalgia. Rather, today's discussion of culture has rendered the distinction between the intellect and the will unnecessary. If pleasure and desire become the filters of culture, then the enlightenment of the will by the intellect becomes unnecessary and possibly meaningless. Secondly, if contemporary education must deal with the particularity and contextuality of its students, and it must, then it must begin with their experience. However, if contextuality and particularity become the only points of measuring education—thus rendering meaningless the distinction between universals and particulars—then again the enlightenment of the will becomes unnecessary because contextuality and particularity will rule instead of first or universal principles. The specific mission of the Catholic university is intellectual in nature, without ignoring the other dimensions of knowing and knowledge. The Catholic academy must proceed according to the specific mission of the university, but it must do so in accor-

dance with the principles of a Catholic philosophical anthropology.

Third, an understanding of the contribution of the Catholic university to Catholic life and experience as a whole is crucial. Higher education as it is envisioned today is perhaps guilty of snobbery. Increasingly, high school education is seen to be insufficient for life. For their part, professional and technical schools of learning—polytechnics—are confused about their purpose and strive to become universities. The university is now considered to be the natural terminus for all students; thus those who do not make it are seen or see themselves to be unqualified or academically inferior. Those who do make it either opt for professional disciplines with early and non-humanistic specialization or opt for the humanities and the liberal arts and are suspected of being unprepared for a profession. In a short, powerful essay “Education and Higher Learning,” Gilson (1957) has some advice that must be applied analogously to the university:

It is anti-democratic to teach all children what only some of them are able to learn. Nay it is anti-democratic to teach what all children can learn by means of methods which only a minority of pupils are able to follow” (p. 318)

The right to go to university, therefore, is often confused with the ability to profit from it (Barzun, 1954).

The Catholic academy cannot on the one hand affirm the complexity of the human person, one bestowed with particular gifts and talents, and on the other hand proceed as if these talents and gifts can only be realized through a university degree. Admittedly professionalism makes its own demands on students and sets out the direction that they must go if they wish to be employed in particular fields, and the university responds to these demands as best it can. All this, however, does not deal with the reality that not all students are or should be destined for the university, let alone the rigor and the intellectual particularity of graduate studies. The academic preparation of the intellectual virtues, realized in graduate rather than undergraduate education, should be extended to a few students for no other obvious reason than that only some are gifted for such study. On the other hand, such an education must not fall into the trap of snobbery, but should be founded upon the simple and obvious conviction that we each contribute to the common good according to our abilities. The Catholic academy must seek ways of enabling its community to respond to human diversity and to do so not in a narrow intellectual way for it would only lead to the erosion of its Catholicity.

The second feature that a Catholic university must pursue is justice understood in its depth and in all its variety. The Catholic intellectual tradition is rich with the social teachings of the Church, teachings that reflect the depth and complexity of the human person when it comes to issues of justice. The concern with social justice is further complicated today with the rise of



Intellectual disagreement must always be governed by charity and mutual respect, though such disagreement is essential for the vitality of the Catholic academy. Furthermore, the secular academy should witness firsthand the devotion of the Catholic academy to the truth and its struggles in learning how this truth is linked to human freedom.

The Catholic academy cannot help but be aware of dramatic epochal cultural changes. For its part, the institutional Church provides rich resources on the issue of faith and culture. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* reflects upon faith and culture in the context of the Catholic university and invites this institution to make its contribution according to the specificity of individual disciplines and according to the specificity of the mission and purpose of the university. The Catholic university only weakens this relationship between faith and culture when it goes at it in a narrow theological manner relegating this dialogue to schools of theology and campus ministry alone.

Another issue that is vital and requires attention in its own right is the curriculum: its coherence, independence, and unity in a Catholic university. No mass baptism is being planned to Christianize the curriculum or some crude intrusion of a simplistic Catholic piety that drags an apparent Catholic application into every teaching context. On the other hand, the Catholic academy has to ask fundamental questions about the nature of its curriculum, especially what is Catholic about its curriculum and how the loss of any of the subjects taught in a particular Catholic university would result in an erosion of its Catholic mission. There are fundamental epistemological considerations about the nature of knowledge and learning; for example, knowledge and human liberation, the abstractive nature of the intellect, the relationship of the transcendentals to the moral and the aesthetic life all must be considered by the Catholic university as a whole. If the epistemological questions in a Catholic university are no different from those of a secular university, then its mission is open to question. And secondly, if the questions of curricular coherence, independence, and interdependence of a Catholic university are no different from those of a secular university, then its mission is open to question.

The culture of the Catholic university and the culture that its students hail from may well be different, but within the halls of the Catholic academy these two worlds must engage in a critical dialogue for our age. Everything noble in the quest for truth according to the mission of the Catholic university must be celebrated and defended; no excuses should be made for the patience that is required in learning about the truth of truly higher things. The dialogue between these two cultures cannot occur without inherent hierarchies, such as a hierarchy of values and a hierarchy of knowledge, and no apologies need be made for the inherently hierarchical dimension of human nature.

Finally, in celebrating their intellectual tradition, Catholic educators



often claim that their distinction lies in educating the whole person. They should beware in thinking that this claim is self-explanatory; it is not, and our age demands that Catholic educators say more about this claim. Today, the human person is pulled across a wide surface called experience, where the unity and order of human personhood are challenged in ways both big and small. If Catholic educators claim to educate the whole human person, then they need to show how this is carried out in higher education in the context of Catholic intellectual culture.

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